

2024 Year of Google Updates

2024 did not only see the rise of AI but also saw the leak of internal documents on how exactly Google ranks business on their platform. With hundreds of pages to crawl through, it took the unique resources and knowledge of marketing experts to comb through it all. Any marketing firm worth their salt is already recommending changes to online strategies to optimize for Google and are also looking towards all the Google updates that came after that document leak. Those who follow the optimization strategies of previous years will quickly fall behind when Google inevitably changes its ranking priorities.

There is no escaping that 2024 was the year of AI dominance. This however came with the widespread issue of spam generation done much faster and in ways harder to detect. With the U.S. A's Federal Trade Commission also declaring fake reviews a crime, Google scrambled to tamper down on those made by AI or otherwise. Google fought AI spam with AI detection tools, making both train off each other in an ouroboros of platform decay. AI brought both incredibly new tools and massive consequences with their adoption, an ongoing drawback to new technology that everyone will struggle with going into 2025.

Google also sunset many of its features this year, including Google Business Profile generated websites and chat features. Google at the same time provided users with new free products, especially to their Merchant Center, making retailers have a far easier time selling products on Google's platform.

Google adopting and dropping features led to many a bug and exploit as well. This year saw a Google Maps pin exploit, allowing bad actors to both move and suspend competitor's business addresses. Hotels also saw themselves edited to display fake WhatsApp numbers, their leads stolen by scammers. Constant patches means constant new holes keep springing up, every business owner needing to remain vigilant so that their business won't be the next attacked by a new exploit.

What's new on Google

01

January

Volatile January 4th Google Local Ranking Algorithm Update

Google started the new year off strong with a highly impactful Local Ranking Algorithm Update. This is not a named update with specific goals in mind, but we are seeing far higher ranking volatility with this routine tweak than we've seen from similar ones in months prior.

Google Confirms Search Ranking Bug – Sites Disappeared from Search Results Over Weekends

Google confirmed a search ranking bug, a "very narrow issue," as Google called it, that affected a "small number of websites" where those ranking would drop out of the Google Search results over the weekend and then reappear during the weekdays. The issue has since been resolved, and the sites should no longer be seeing its effects, save for historical ranking data November through early January.

Google is Shutting Down Websites Made with Google Business Profile

Google announced it is shutting down Websites made with Google Business Profiles. They will stop working on March 1, 2024 and will only redirect to a Google Business Profile listing until June 10, 2024. After that, anyone who tries to go to that listing will get a dead page - a "page not found" error page.

Google Circle to Search and Upgraded AI-Powered Multisearch

Google announced two new search features, the first being circle to search and the second is AI-powered multisearch experience.

Circle To Search:

With Circle to Search you can select images, text or videos and then by circling, highlighting, scribbling or tapping - Google can search the object within that image, text or video. Google wrote, "Circle to Search can help you quickly identify items in a photo or video."

AI-Powered Multisearch:

Multisearch is not new, it was announced last year for images. But now Google has upgraded it so that you can take a photo with your camera or upload a photo from your library or upload a screenshot. Then you ask a question using the Google app, the new AI-powered multisearch experience will show results "with AI-powered insights that go beyond just visual matches," Google said.

Google said, "this gives you the ability to ask more complex or nuanced questions about what you see, and quickly find and understand key information."

Google Search to Show More Third-Party Comparison Websites in Europe

Google announced it will be making changes to its search results to comply with the new regulation called the Digital Markets Act (DMA). This will result in some Google vertical search units being removed and third-party comparison site units being added to the search results.

Google said that it will:

1. Remove "some features from the search page, such as the Google Flights unit."

2. Add dedicated units that include a group of links to comparison sites from across the web.
3. Add query shortcuts at the top of the search page to help people refine their search, including by focusing results just on comparison sites.
4. For categories like hotels, Google will also start testing a dedicated space for comparison sites and direct suppliers to show more detailed individual results including images, star ratings and more.

Google Search Local "Nearby Events and Deals"

Google has been testing out a new local search box titled "Nearby events and deals." This box contains links to local stores and places that have events and/or deals in the area.

Google Hotels View Market Comparison Pricing Feature

Google Business Profiles has a feature named view market comparison. Here, Google shows you how your hotel is priced against the competition in the area. It has a price comparison of your hotel rates and other properties.

02

February

Google's "Driving Directions" Metric Highly Unreliable in Early 2024

Starting in late January and flowing into February, a bug occurred with Google's driving directions metric. Many a business listing saw a significant increase in this KPI seemingly without reason. Google initially made the following comment on the issue:

"Starting in January 2024, you might see fewer direction requests. This is because Google is making updates to better protect people's privacy and give you

more accurate results."

Google did not initially give details, but it was later confirmed to be a bug as Google phased out many third-party cookies. In compliance with the Digital Markets Act and other regulations, Google transitioned towards primarily first-party data. The bug occurred from Google trying to remove redundant KPIs from lapsed external cookies, overcorrecting in some instances.

Google is currently on track to correct this bug and is allowing its partners to repull the inaccurate data in the near future. For now, the driving directions metric may be unreliable, but this issue should be corrected and marketers able to replace the data after some time.

Google Implements New DMA Compliant SERP in Europe

Europe's Digital Markets Act (DMA) has begun to take effect and we are starting to see tech gatekeepers such as Google alter their service offerings as a result. As part of compliance, companies are required to avoid "self-preferencing" – treating their services/products more favorably than those of third parties.

Google is starting to show a new local SERP in Europe that demotes the Local Pack and adds a new Places (Sites) Carousel at the top of the page. The carousel appears to mostly feature third party directories, such as TripAdvisor, Zamato and Hotels.com. The pages are algorithmically driven and so the various SERP features don't always appear in the same place.

Google Maps Outage on February 14th

A glitch saw a complete outage of Google Maps, and thereby the local pack, on February 14th.

If metrics surrounding that date are lower than usual, it is highly likely that this is the culprit.

Google Maps Launches AI-Powered Local Business Search

After entering a conversational search query, Google Maps will suggest personalized recommendations for businesses, events, restaurants, and activities in the area.

For example, you can ask Maps to recommend “places with a vintage vibe in San Francisco,” and it will return suggestions like clothing boutiques, record stores, and flea markets. The results are categorized with photos and review highlights to explain why they meet your criteria.

The technology aims to enhance local discovery and exploration in Google Maps, potentially driving more qualified traffic to niche businesses or lesser-known attractions and events.

Google Business Profiles Suffer Brutal Attack Through Local Service Ads Loophole

When more than one LSA is linked to a Google Business Profile, the ad becomes invisible, killing off all leads. Alarmingly, bad actors can use this loophole to intentionally create an LSA linked to a competing business’s GBP without their knowledge, preventing those ads from reaching consumers.

If an LSA you manage has unexpectedly stopped generating leads, it may be due to someone else linking an LSA. Identifying this issue requires consultation with your Google support representative.

Google Business Profiles Disabling Third-Party Ordering Providers

Google has updated the Google Business Profiles requirements for ordering or delivery providers to require them to add instructions on how to remove that service from a Google local listing.

The request to have this provider removed is not new but what is new is the link to the third party integrations.

03

March

Google Releases March 2024 Core Update and Multiple Spam Updates

The March 2024 update makes improvements to Google’s core ranking system as well as upgrades Google’s Helpful content system. Google says this core update should lead to a reduction in unhelpful, low-quality, and unoriginal content in its search results by 40%. These spam portions of the update intend to target AI-generated content, expired domain misuse, and authority abuse.

AI Spam Sites Beat Google’s March 2024 Spam Update

AI generated spam sites defeated Google’s March 2024 spam update and are still crushing the top of the search results. The primary sites to circumvent Google’s March spam updates are subdomains. For example, there are a group of main domains have been around since the summer of 2020. The spammy subdomains were first spotted by the Internet Archive on November 30, 2022, coincidentally the launch date of ChatGPT. The subdomains were half-finished and essentially dormant until March 2024, when they rapidly expanded and immediately began to rank for thousands of search queries. This means that spammers are keeping domains on standby to circumvent Google spam updates as needed, a very bad sign in Google’s ability to fight these bad actors in the future.

Google Europe Search Hijacking Bug with TripAdvisor, Booking, Hotel.com, and More

Google Search may have a bug in European regions with hotel listings being hijacked by spammy sites. Google will show TripAdvisor, Hotels.com, Booking.com and other legitimate websites in its search results but when you click on those listings, you’re taken to a different spam website all together.

Google Shuts Down Google Business Profiles Websites

Google announced in January that it would be shutting down Business Profile websites on March 1, 2024. As of March 5, 2024, websites made with Google Business Profiles now redirect to that business’s profile instead. This pattern will continue until June 10, 2024. After that, customers will get a “Page not found” error when they try to visit the former Google-generated websites.

Google Business Profiles with Bookable Services and New Multi-Tab Layout

Google Business Profiles can now show services with bookable buttons. Local panels have had the option for booking button since 2017 but now they are also available within profile’s directly. The services section is also now separated into two sub-menus on mobile. The first tab is “Bookable services”, where you can find a “Book” button next to each service. The second tab is “Additional Services”, the standard services section always seen within Google Business Profiles.

Google Integrates Social Media Posts into Google Business Profiles

Google updated its Google Business Profile help documentation to state:

“Business Profiles with an associated social media link may find their social

media posts surfaced on their Business Profile automatically.”

While businesses can manage which social media profiles are associated with their Google Business Profile (to a limit of one account per social media platform), the posts displayed from those profiles are automatic and cannot be controlled.

The feature is currently available for select regions and may not be accessible to all Business Profiles.

04

April

Google Maps Releases New Directions, Travel, and EV Features

Google has announced a number of new travel features with Google Maps and Travel around driving alternatives, trains and buses, travel impact mode and then some new EV driving direction features. Google says these features are to give you more “sustainable choices.”

Google Maps / Travel

1. Driving alternatives in Google Maps: Google driving directions will soon show public transit or a walking suggestion next to driving routes. This only happens if travel times are comparable and practical. This is coming to over 15 cities including Amsterdam, Barcelona, London, Montreal, Paris, Rome and Sydney.
2. Trains & buses in Google Search: Google can now show you train schedules and ticket prices directly in Google Search. This is available for rail travel in 38 countries around the world, as well as long-distance buses in 15 countries.

3. Train suggestions on Google Flights: Google Flights will show you train route suggestions in the flight search results. This builds on similar suggestions Google already show in Google Search for flight queries. This will roll out in the coming months.
4. Travel Impact Model: Google already shows you estimated emissions in Google Flights. Now Google gives you those estimates through the Google developer API, a Google Sheets extension and a calculator on the TIM website.

EV Specific Announcements

1. EV Charging Station Pins: Google will highlight nearby EV charging stations for in-car Maps, with information about station availability and charging speeds.
2. AI-powered summaries for EV charging stations: AI summaries from user reviews will better help users pinpoint charging stations. So many charging locations just do not work, so this may help, if Google can keep these summaries up-to-date: This information would be based off the new EV charging reviews form.
3. Multi-waypoint EV trip planning: When users create a multi-stop trip, in-car Google Maps will suggest required charging stops. This feature will be available globally in the coming months for vehicles with Google built-in.
4. And hotels that support EVs:

Google Business Profiles Gains Select Preferred Menu Source

Google Business Profiles now lets you select your preferred menu source. You have three options for your restaurant: create or copy a menu, copy from a website, or pick a third-party platform to take the menu from. The selected menu will appear publicly on those Business Profiles.

Google Business Profiles' New "Add Amenity to your Website"

Google seems to have added a new feature to allow businesses to add an amenity or amenities from their Google Business Profiles to their website. When clicking this new “Add Amenity to your Website” button, Google pops up a overlay that says you can use the Google Maps Platform to show nearby amenities, with the code being a simple copy and paste.

European Hotels Can Remove Pricing Information from Google Hotel Search

Google sent an email to European based hotel and vacation property managers that with the new European rules, they can now remove pricing information and other information from showing in the Google Search results. Google said this is available to hotels in the European Economic Area (EEA).

Google Local Reviews Reactions Begin Full Rollout

In November 2023, Google began allowing reactions on local photos and some reviews. Now in April, a full rollout of this feature has begun, soon allowing all users to utilize this feature.

When searcher try and “heart” a local review within the Google Search and Maps local listings. Google then shows this disclaimer popup for “reactions” that reads:

“Reactions are used across Google, including Maps & Search. To remove a reaction, tap the reaction icon again.”

05

May

Google Launches AI Overviews in US: More Countries Coming Soon

The rise of AI has seen every tech company from the smallest startups to the largest corporations adopt this incredible new technology. Google is no different and has integrated AI utility into their biggest product, that being Google Search and Google Maps. Google's new AI Overview (previously known as the Search Generative Experience) utilizes artificial intelligence to deliver a more robust, personalized, and intuitive experience to its users. What we are seeing now is the largest shakeup of how Search Engine Results Pages (SERPs) are being presented to users in years. This means a big change in how information is retrieved and displayed. All Google users, from marketers to everyday consumers, will need to understand how search is changing.

New Local Ranking Factor: Service Areas

Service areas were previously thought not to affect rankings for a Service Area Business, but recent tests have shown this to be a relevant ranking factor. While setting the service area historically had no influence on your Google local rankings, that has now changed.

Google Local Service Ads Tests Message Multiple Businesses

Google is testing a new button for the Local Service Ads to "message multiple businesses" instead of just messaging one business at a time.

06

June

Google Search Document Leak Reveals Inner Workings of Ranking Algorithm

Thousands of documents, which appear to come from Google's internal Content API Warehouse, were released on Github by an automated bot. The documents reveal how Google Search is using, or has used, clicks, links, content, entities, Chrome data and more for ranking. To be clear, the leaked documentation doesn't contain confirmed ranking factors. It contains information on more than 2,500 modules and over 14,000 attributes.

Google Business Profile Call History & Chat Going Away

Google will be shutting down the Google Business Profile chat and call history feature on July 31, 2024.

Along with this shutdown, Google has begun testing adding native SMS and WhatsApp messaging support for Google Maps business listings. This may be a future replacement for the loss of Google Business Profile chat.

Google Map Pin Exploit Leads to Local Rankings Drop & Possible Suspension

A bug appeared on Google Maps where pins were being moved around and piled together into one location. This was soon exploited by bad actors to bury businesses and make them near unviewable. When the affected businesses tried to move their pin back, it often led to their Google Business Profile being suspended. Google is now working to resolve this issue.

Google Warns: Sites That Are Inaccessible on Mobile Will Not Be Indexed

Google said it will not index sites that are not accessible on mobile devices after July 5, 2024. This means that if your site won't load at all on a mobile phone, like an Android phone, then Google won't index it. It does not mean if your site is not mobile-friendly, that Google won't index it — Google will. Google will index desktop interfaces of sites, as long as the desktop interface loads on an Android mobile phone.

Google Maps Adds Wheelchair Accessible Icon to Business Listings

Google has added a wheelchair-accessible icon to the Business Profile listings in Google Maps of businesses that self-claim they are wheelchair-accessible. There is a little wheelchair-accessible icon next to the business name, but this only shows in Google Maps, not in Google Search - for now.

Google Local Panels Gain Menu Button

Google seems to be adding a "menu" button to the Google Business Profiles, the local panels, in the web search results. Clicking on it expands the window and shows the menu, with these clicks tracked within Google Business Profiles.

Google Business Profiles Websites No Longer Load - 404

Google Business Profiles websites, which stopped loading websites and began redirecting to the Google Business Profiles listing on Google Maps now completely 404 - as was planned.

07

July

Google Verification Status Tool Gains New Options

Google has added new fields and options to the Google Business Profiles verification status tool. These options should help some businesses that are having issues getting verified on Google Maps.

These new options include:

- Exterior Photos with Signage
- Exterior Photos with Address Markers
- Utility Bills
- Any Other Relevant Proof that the Business Exists

Menu items and Peak Hours Confirmed as Google Local Ranking Signals

A recent report shows that Google Search looks at the items in your menu within your Google Business Profile and how busy your establishment is during popular times as local ranking factors and signals.

Nearly 60% of Google searches end without a click in 2024

A majority of Google searches – 58.5% in the U.S. and 59.7% in the EU – result in zero clicks. A zero-click search happens when users end their session or enter a new query without clicking on any results. Meanwhile, almost 30% of clicks go to Google’s properties and about 36% of clicks go to the open web, a new zero-click search study finds.

Google Gives Exact Reason Why Negative SEO Doesn’t Work

Negative SEO is the practice of sabotaging a competitor with an avalanche of low-quality links. The idea is that Google will assume that the competitor is a spam listing and knock

them out of the search engine results pages.

Two main reasons that negative SEO does not harm businesses is first that links from irrelevant topics are not counted. If you run a flower shop and have a sudden influx of links from low-quality online gambling websites, they are not considered for rankings. Second, Google matches topics from page to page. There was a time, in the early days of SEO, when thousands of links from non-matching topics could boost a site to the top of Google’s search results. Some link builders used to offer “free” traffic counter widgets that when placed in the footer would contain a link back to their client sites and they used to work. But Google tightened up on those kinds of links.

Google Maps Add Stop Advertisements

Did you know that Google Maps can suggest that you add a stop along the way as an advertisement? It pops up as you are driving and asks you if you want to “Add stop” or “Cancel.”

Promoted pins in navigation are not new - they let people see relevant ads for businesses like gas stations, restaurants, and stores along their route. To avoid driver distraction, these ads expand only if they’re tapped on, and disappear quickly after a short time.

Google AI Overviews Only Show for 7% of Queries, a New Low

Some of the biggest visibility drops were on education, entertainment and ecommerce queries. Reddit and Quora are almost never cited anymore.

Google Search Chat Feature Won’t Let You Start New Chats

July 15th, Google ended support for new chats to be initiated within Google Local, Google Business Profiles, in Google Search and Google Maps. This is not a surprise, Google told us in May this was coming and now it is here.

Billions of Google goo.gl URLs Will No Longer Work

Google announced its URL shortener service will stop working completely on August 25, 2025.

Starting August 23, 2024, goo.gl links will start displaying an interstitial page for a percentage of existing links to notify users that the link will no longer be supported after August 25, 2025 prior to navigating to the original target page. Then after August 25, 2025, the links will 404 and not redirect to the right destination URL.

Google Confirms Ranking Boost for Country Code Domains

Google’s Gary Illyes confirmed that country code domain names perform better in search results because Google gives an edge to local sites.

08

August

Google Search Expands AI Overviews Globally

Along with expanding to six new countries, AI overviews have gained new features such as:

- Ability to save specific AI Overviews for future reference
- A new link display on desktop and mobile to showcase relevant websites
- Testing in-text links within AI Overviews

- An option to simplify the language in some summaries
- A “listen” button

Google’s AI Now Chooses Your Local Ad Photos

Google has announced a new update to its Local Services Ads (LSA) platform, implementing an automated photo selection feature. According to the announcement, this change is designed to increase ad engagement. The selection process will be based on an image’s perceived likelihood of improving user interaction with the advertisement.

Key Points of the Update:

1. Photo inclusion may affect ad ranking
2. Google recommends uploading 3-5 images to LSA profiles
3. Photos should be high-quality, relevant, and original
4. Not all ads will consistently include photos

Google Business Profiles Now Let You Generate Menus from Photos

Google Business Profiles have a new AI feature to let you upload a photo of your menu, Google then creating your menu items based on that photo. This is a generative AI feature and is currently considered “experimental.”

Google Hotel Listings Under Siege: Fake WhatsApp Numbers and Marking as Closed

Spammers have uncovered a listing editing exploit which has allowed them to hijack some Google Hotel listings. Hotels are being marked as permanently closed and/or having their phone numbers changed to a scam WhatsApp number. This issue seems to have started for hotels in the UAE and Indonesia but has potential to spread to all Google hotel listings.

09

September

Google’s Profile Restriction Policy Gives Harsher Punishments for Fake Reviews

Google released updated GBP restrictions for policy violations. This likely came in response to the FTC’s recent banning of fake reviews. Google will now do 3 things to a business if caught performing this illegal practice.

1. Not allow new reviews/ratings for a set period of time
2. Existing reviews/ratings will be unpublished for a set period of time
3. A warning will display letting consumers know fake reviews were removed

Warnings such as these look absolutely horrible on a business, obviously something all would want to avoid.

Google Reviews and Menu Descriptions Under Local Photos

Google is now showing reviews and menu descriptions when browsing photos on Google Business Profile listing. These reviews are aimed to be relevant to the photo being viewed, that being mentions of the food item, service, or product, that are visible within the photo.

Google Mass Suspends Google Business Profiles in Certain Business Categories

Either due to a glitch or a failed attempt at curtailing spam, Google is mass disabling Business Profiles in specific sets of industries. If you work in the garage door, trash/dumpster and/or personal injury lawyer sector, it is possible some of your listings have been suspended as well.

Unless Google undoes this sudden mass suspension, the only way to rectify the issue is to manually file an appeal.

Event Posts Outperform Offer Posts

A new internal study at DAC uncovered something new for optimizing Google Posts. Event Posts (which display on mobile & desktop) outperformed Offer Posts in a heads-up test. If you are running Offer Google Posts, try a test to see if performance is higher by switching the “type” to Event.

10

October

Small Google Business Profile Updates Triggering Re-verification

A recent large uptick in unverified listings through the month of October seems to be stemming from primary and/or secondary category updates. Google updated their help documentation to specifically call this out, but other small profile updates have also been known to trigger re-verification.

There is currently no workaround to this issue other than manually reverifying.

Google’s Adds a Slew of New AI Features

Google rolled out new AI-organized search results, AI Overview links, and began implementing AI ads. These AI-driven updates to both Search and Lens expand visual and audio capabilities as well as grant marketers a new avenue to reach their clientele. The sponsored AI Overview ads will appear below the organic AI-generated answer where users will see price comparisons, product reviews, where to buy, and more. Shopping ads will appear above and alongside Lens’ visual search results before the end of 2024.

Google Local Panel Adds “About This Place” Section

Google is testing adding a new section named “About this place” to the local panel in the Google Business Profile listings within Google Search and Google Maps. This section shows you text and image reviews in a stacked card format.

Google Adds Edit and Delete Button Links to Reviews

Google has added an edit and delete button link next to the reviews added to a Google Business Profile listing. This gives users a quicker method to modify or remove reviews they left for a business and potentially improves the likelihood businesses can convince consumers to change negative reviews into positive ones.

Google Local Service Ads to Soon Require Google Business Profile

Google will soon require businesses who want to advertise using Google Local Service Ads to also have a Google Business Profile. Google posted a notice that reads, “By Thursday, November 21, 2024, your Local Services ad will need a matching Google Business Profile to continue appearing in search results and to display your customer reviews.”

Google Local Service Ads Adds “Request Competitive Quotes” Button

Google Local Service Ads are now adding a “Request competitive quotes” button after users have already selected the business from which they want a quote. When users follow through with this new feature, they are told to enter a message and their email address, which then sends the request to all the businesses simultaneously. It is yet unclear if all businesses are charged with a “lead” in this scenario.

Google Business Profiles Removes Health Insurance Accepted

Google is removing the health insurance fields from Google Business Profiles. This change is suspected due to potential confusions that could arise. Even if a specific plan name is accepted by a provider, some specific options or plans within that company may not be accepted.

11 November

Google November 2024 Core Algorithm Update

Google announced a large-scale core algorithm update this past month. These are routine updates which are necessary to ensure the general health of ranking algorithms, a collection of minor tweaks that aren’t worth note individually. Something that is notable regarding this update however is that it seems to have exacerbated the changes made to sites hit by the Helpful Content Update. If your business has seen a sudden increase or decrease of traffic this month, the core algorithm update may be the cause.

Google Maps Adds “Products Nearby” for Product Searches

Google Maps will now show you products from nearby stores if you search Google Maps for product related queries. Google wrote, “Now, you can search in Google Maps for items like pickleball rackets, board games, ice cream makers and more to find nearby stores that have them in stock so you can pick up what you need, stat.”

Google Lens for AI-Powered In-Store and Local Shopping

Google’s latest shopping updates include real-time price comparisons and local inventory searches. Just point and shoot using Google’s AI-powered Google Lens and get prices, reviews, product details and more while looking at products in a retail store.

Google Improves its Business Profile’s AI-transcribed Menu Uploads

Google’s AI menu feature now supports multi-page PDFs. This update is designed to make menu uploads faster, more accurate and hassle-free.

12 December

Google Local Service Ads Within Local Pack Results

Google is testing showing Local Service Ads directly in the Google local pack. They are labeled as sponsored, but they can now show at the top of bottom of the local pack.

Google Maps Adds Report Business Conduct to Report Review Manipulation

Google has launched a new report form in Google Maps to “report business conduct.” Specifically, this form is to report businesses that offer incentives in exchange for reviews, or pressuring people to leave reviews.

Google's Review Deletions: Why 5-star reviews are Disappearing

Google is actively combating fake and incentivized reviews, aiming to maintain the integrity of its platform.

Analysis: 75% of Google AI Overview links come from top 12 organic rankings

And if you aren't getting clicks, it may be because AI Overviews and featured snippets, in combination, take up 75.7% of screen real estate.

Google Business Profiles Adds More Hours Categories

Google now supports even more categories for more types of hours for your business listing. Google added a number of new hour types for religious institutions and restaurants.

Google Tightens Ad Policies to Align with Search Spam Rules

Advertisers risk ad disapprovals if their sites violate Google's spam policies, making search compliance critical to PPC success.

Google Refreshes Generative AI Prohibited Use Policy

Google clarifies banned uses of its generative AI, prohibiting deepfakes, explicit content, and deception, while allowing certain exceptions.

Google December 2024 Spam Update Rollout Shocks Before Holidays

Google completed the rollout of the December 2024 spam update after a seven-day rollout cycle. This update started on December 19, 2024 and 12 pm ET, and was completed on December 26, 2024. This was a broad spam update, not a link spam update and was a big and widespread update. Many site owners talked about deindexing and deranking issues during this update, especially troubling during the holiday season.

